



THE WIND IN THE WILLOWS

Coloring Book

TOAD'S ADVENTURES

by Kenneth Grahame
with pictures by
Dominique Michele Strandquest



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in the Willows*

COLORING BOOK

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[TEXT ABRIDGED]

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It was a bright morning in the early part of summer; the river was moving in its shady banks at its accustomed pace, and a hot sun seemed to be pulling everything green and bushy and spiky out of the earth. The Mole and the Water Rat had been up since dawn very busy on matters connected with the opening of the boating season; painting and varnishing, repairing cushions, and so on; and were finishing breakfast in their little parlor when a heavy knock sounded at the door.



"Bother!" said the Rat, all over egg. "See who it is, Mole, like a good chap, since you've finished."

The Mole went to attend the summons, and the Rat heard him utter a cry of surprise. "Mr. Badger!"

This was a wonderful thing, indeed, that the Badger should pay a formal call on them, or indeed on anybody. Badger lived in a comfortable, peaceful little house in the woods (so deeply hidden hardly anyone could find it) and he didn't like coming out at any time. If you wanted him badly, he generally had to be caught as he slipped quietly along a hedgerow of an early morning or a late evening.

The last time they had seen Badger had been a sad occasion because they had just heard of the latest (seventh) crash of their friend, Toad, who seemed to crack-up every moving vehicle he laid his hands on, whether it was a rowboat, a houseboat, or the canary-colored horse-cart that had been his pride and joy.

Recently, though, in Toad's craze for speed, he had been in the hospital three times, and had enormous fines to pay. True, he was rich and lived in his ancestral mansion, Toad Hall, but he wasn't a millionaire. And he was a hopelessly bad driver, with no regard for law and order.

The Badger strode heavily into the room now, and stood looking at the two animals with an expression full of seriousness. "The hour has come!" said the Badger at last with great solemnity.

"What hour?" asked the Rat uneasily.

"*Whose* hour, you should rather say," replied the Badger. "Why, Toad's hour! The hour of Toad! We're going to take him in hand to-day!"

"Toad's hour, of course!" cried the Mole delightedly. Mole remembered the afternoon picnic he and Rat had been having one day on the banks of the river, when Toad had nearly ruined it all by splashing a rowboat in front of them and nearly capsizing it. "Whatever he takes up," Rat had said, "he gets tired of—no stability."



"This very morning," continued the Badger, taking an armchair, "as I learnt last night, a powerful motor-car will arrive at Toad Hall."

"A motor-car!"

"Yes, on approval or return. At this very moment, perhaps, Toad is busy arraying himself in those singularly hideous habiliments so dear to him. We must be up and doing. You two animals will accompany me instantly to Toad Hall, and the work of rescue shall be accomplished."

"Right you are!" cried the Rat, starting up. "We'll rescue the poor unhappy animal!"

They set off up the road on their mission of mercy, Badger leading the way, and reached the carriage-drive of Toad Hall to find, as Badger had anticipated, a shiny new motor-car, of great size, painted a bright red (Toad's favorite color), standing in front of the house. As they



neared the door it was flung open, and Mr. Toad, arrayed in goggles, cap, gaiters, and enormous overcoat, came swaggering down the steps, drawing on his gauntleted gloves.

"Hullo! come on, you fellows!" he cried cheerfully on catching sight of them. "You're just in time to come with me for a jolly—to come for a jolly—for a—er—jolly—" His hearty accents faltered as he noticed the stern unbending look on the countenances of his silent friends.



The Badger strode up the steps. "Take him inside," he said sternly to his companions. Then, as Toad was hustled through the door, struggling and protesting, he turned to the chauffeur in charge of the new motor-car. "I'm afraid you won't be wanted today," he said. "Mr. Toad has changed his mind."

"Now, then!" Badger said to the Toad, when the four of them stood in the hall, "first of all, take those ridiculous things off!"

"Shan't!" replied Toad, with great spirit. "What is the meaning of this gross outrage? I demand an instant explanation."

They had to lay Toad out on the floor, kicking and shouting, before they could get the motor-clothes off him. A good deal of his bluster seemed to have evaporated with the removal of his fine panoply.



"You knew it must come to this, Toad," the Badger explained severely. "You've disregarded all our warnings, you've gone on squandering your money, and you're getting us animals a bad name by your furious driving and your smashes and your rows with the police. I'll make one more effort to bring you to reason." He took Toad firmly by the arm, led him into the smoking-room, and closed the door behind them.

"*That's no good!*" said the Rat contemptuously. "*Talking to Toad'll never cure him. He'll say anything.*"

Through the closed door they could hear the drone of the Badger's voice, punctuated by Toad's long-drawn sobs. After three-quarters of an hour the door opened, and Badger reappeared, leading a limp and dejected Toad.

"Sit down there, Toad," said the Badger kindly. "My friends," he went on, "I am pleased to inform you that Toad has at last seen the error of his ways. He's sorry and promises to give up motor-cars forever."



"That is very good news," said the Rat gravely. "Could we hear Toad himself say he's sorry?"

There was a long, long pause. Toad looked desperately this way and that. At last he spoke. "No!" he said, "I'm *not* sorry. And it wasn't folly at all! It was simply glorious!"

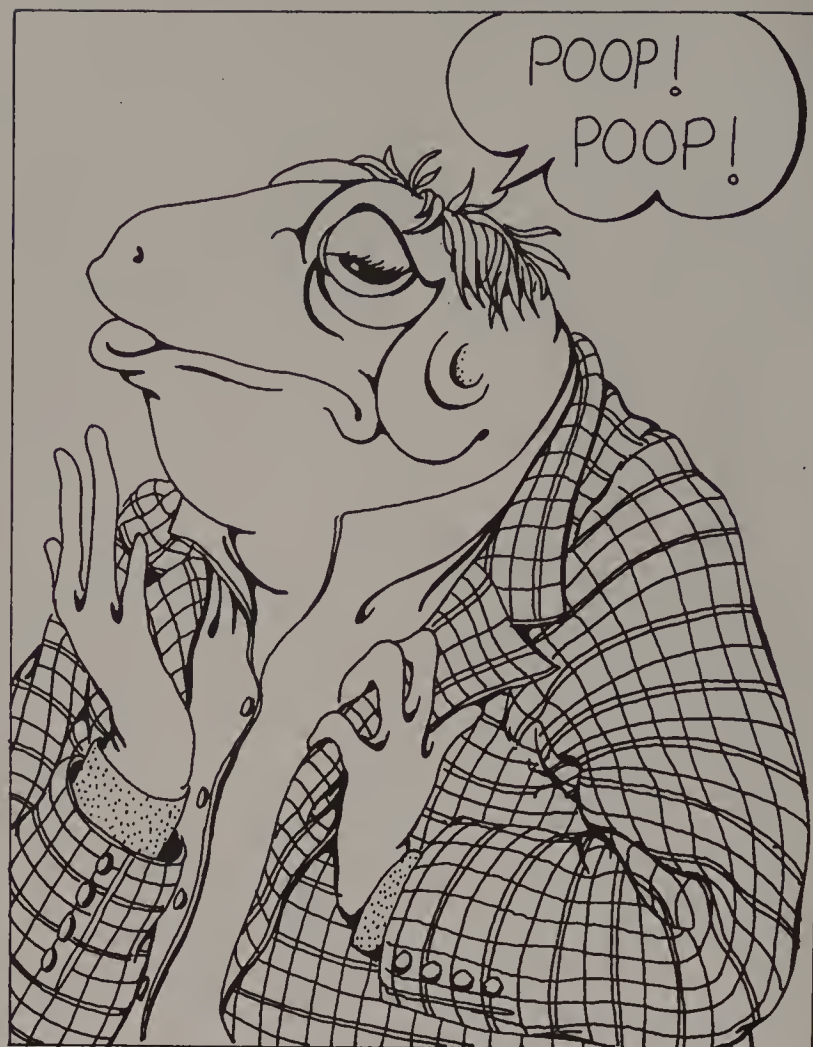
"Then you don't promise," said the Badger, "never to touch a motor-car again?"

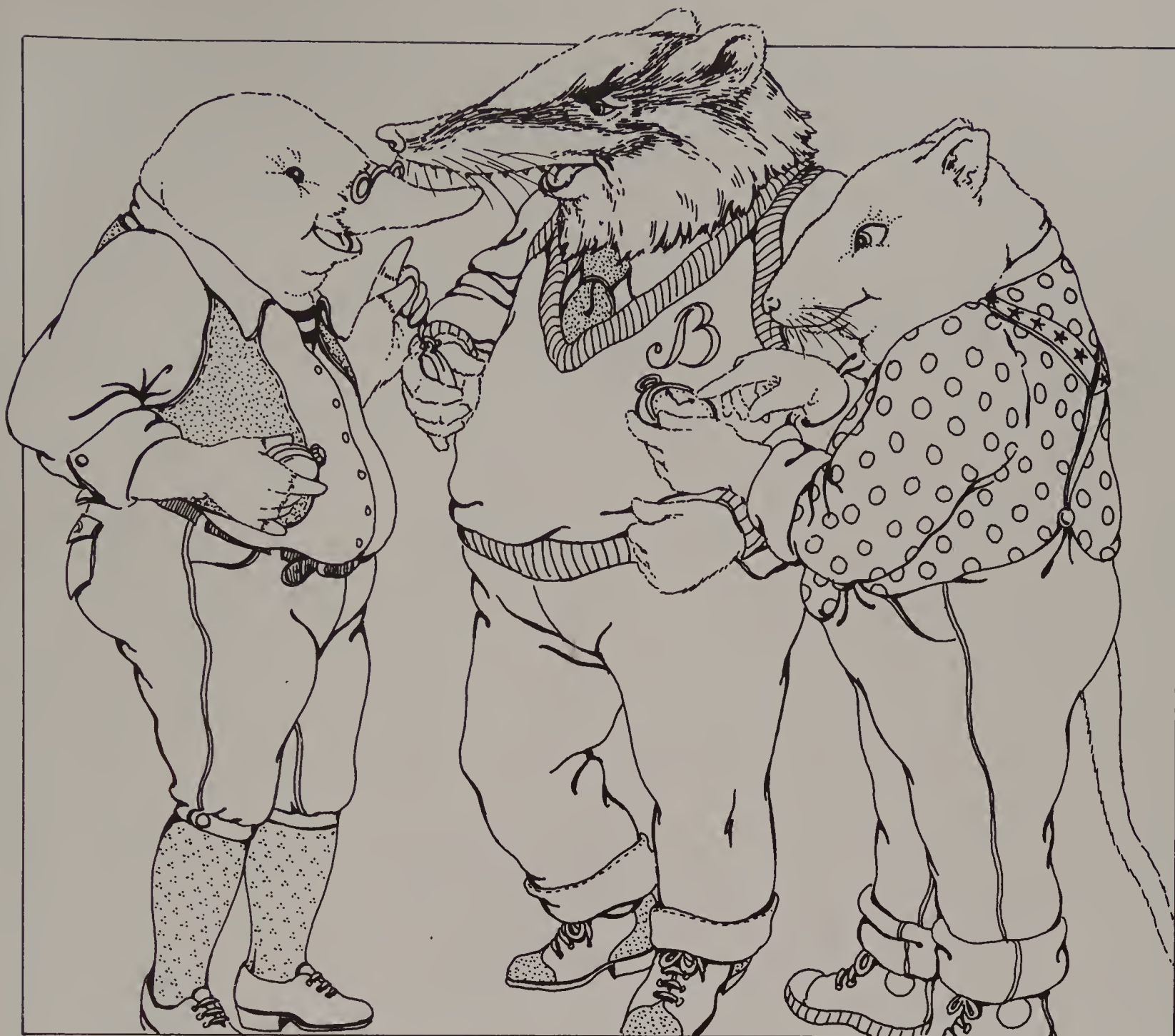
"Certainly not!" replied Toad. "On the contrary, I faithfully promise that the very first motor-car I see, poop-poop! off I go in it!"

"Very well, then," said the Badger firmly, rising to his feet. "Since you won't yield to persuasion, we'll try what force can do. You've often asked us three to come and stay with you, Toad, in this handsome house of yours; well, now we're going to. Take him upstairs, you two, and lock him up in his bedroom while we decide what to do."

"It's for your own good, Toady, you know," said the Rat kindly, as Toad was hauled up the stairs. "Think what fun we shall all have together. No more of those regrettable incidents with the police."

"And no more weeks in hospital, being ordered about by female nurses, Toad," added the Mole, turning the key on him. They descended the stair, Toad shouting abuse at them through the keyhole.





“It’s going to be a tedious business,” said the Badger, sighing. “I’ve never seen Toad so determined. He must never be left an instant unguarded.” They arranged watches accordingly. Each animal took turns to sleep in Toad’s room at night, and they divided the day between them. At first Toad was very trying to his guardians. When his violent paroxysms possessed him he would arrange bedroom chairs in rude resemblance of a motor-car and would crouch on the foremost of them, bent forward and staring fixedly ahead, making uncouth and ghastly noises.

One fine morning, Badger met Rat on the stairs, coming up to relieve him. "Toad's still in bed," he told Rat, "very quiet, depressed. Now, look out, Rat! When Toad's submissive, playing at being the hero of a Sunday-school prize, then he's at his artfullest. Well, I must be off."

"How are you to-day, old chap?" inquired the Rat cheerfully, as he approached Toad's bedside.

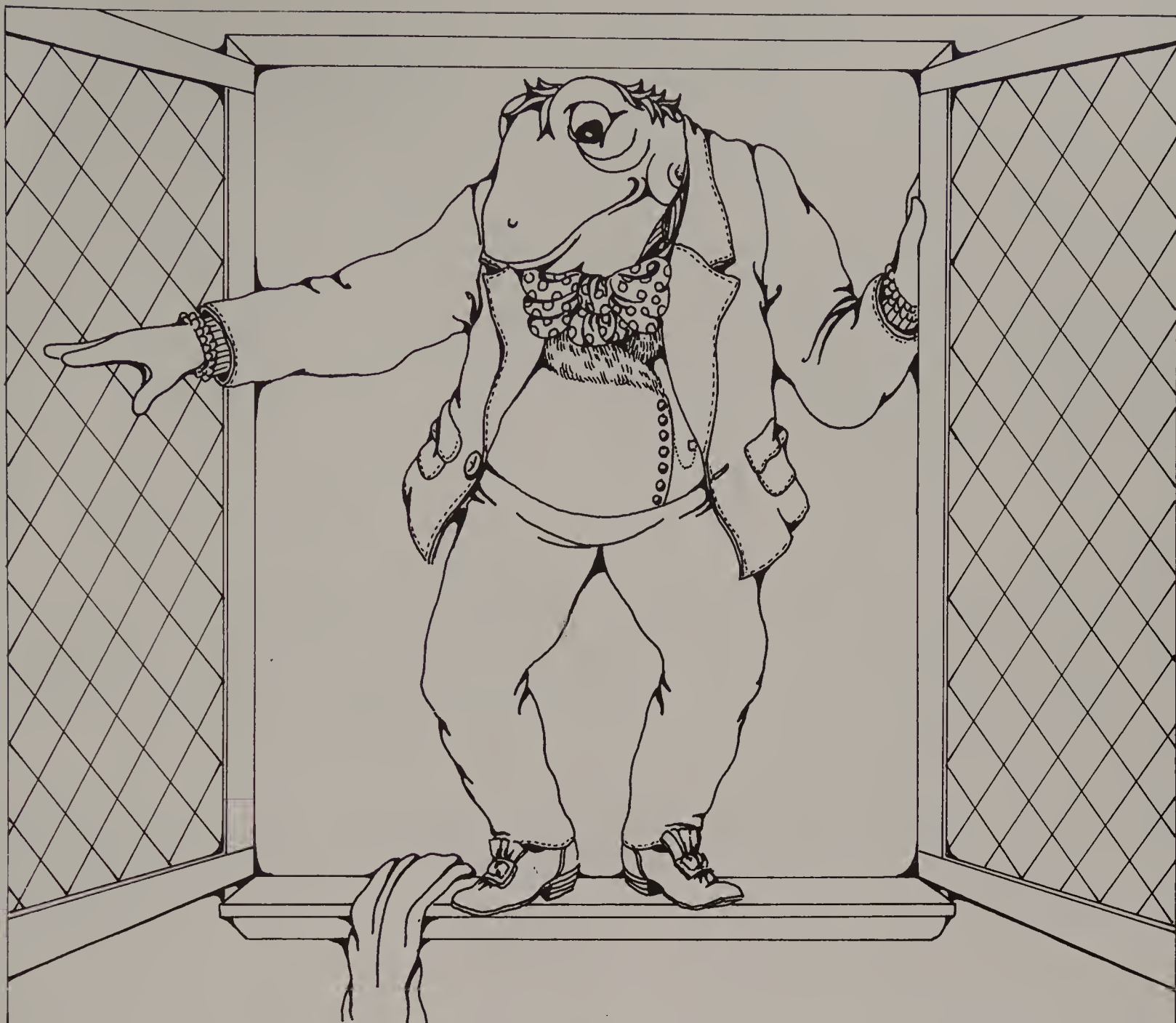
A feeble voice replied, "Thank you so much, dear Ratty! So good of you to inquire! Please do not trouble about me. I do not expect to be a burden much longer."

"Well, I hope not," said the Rat heartily. "You've been a fine bother to us all this time, and in such weather. Think of the boating you've made us miss."

"I'm a nuisance, I know. If you could just—for the last time probably—step round and fetch the doctor. Also if I could just have a lawyer—"

"A doctor! A lawyer! O, he must be really bad!" Rat said to himself. "I'll give in to him, but I'll still lock the door."





Toad, who had hopped lightly out of bed as soon as he heard the key turned in the lock, watched from the window till Rat disappeared; then he dressed as quickly as possible in his smartest suit, filled his pockets with cash, and, knotting the sheets from his bed together, he scrambled out of the window and marched off whistling a merry tune.

It was a gloomy luncheon for Rat when he had to face Badger and Mole with his pitiful story. The Badger's caustic remarks may be imagined, and even Mole could not help saying, "You've been a bit of a duffer this time, Ratty!"

"Toad did it awfully well," said the crestfallen Rat.

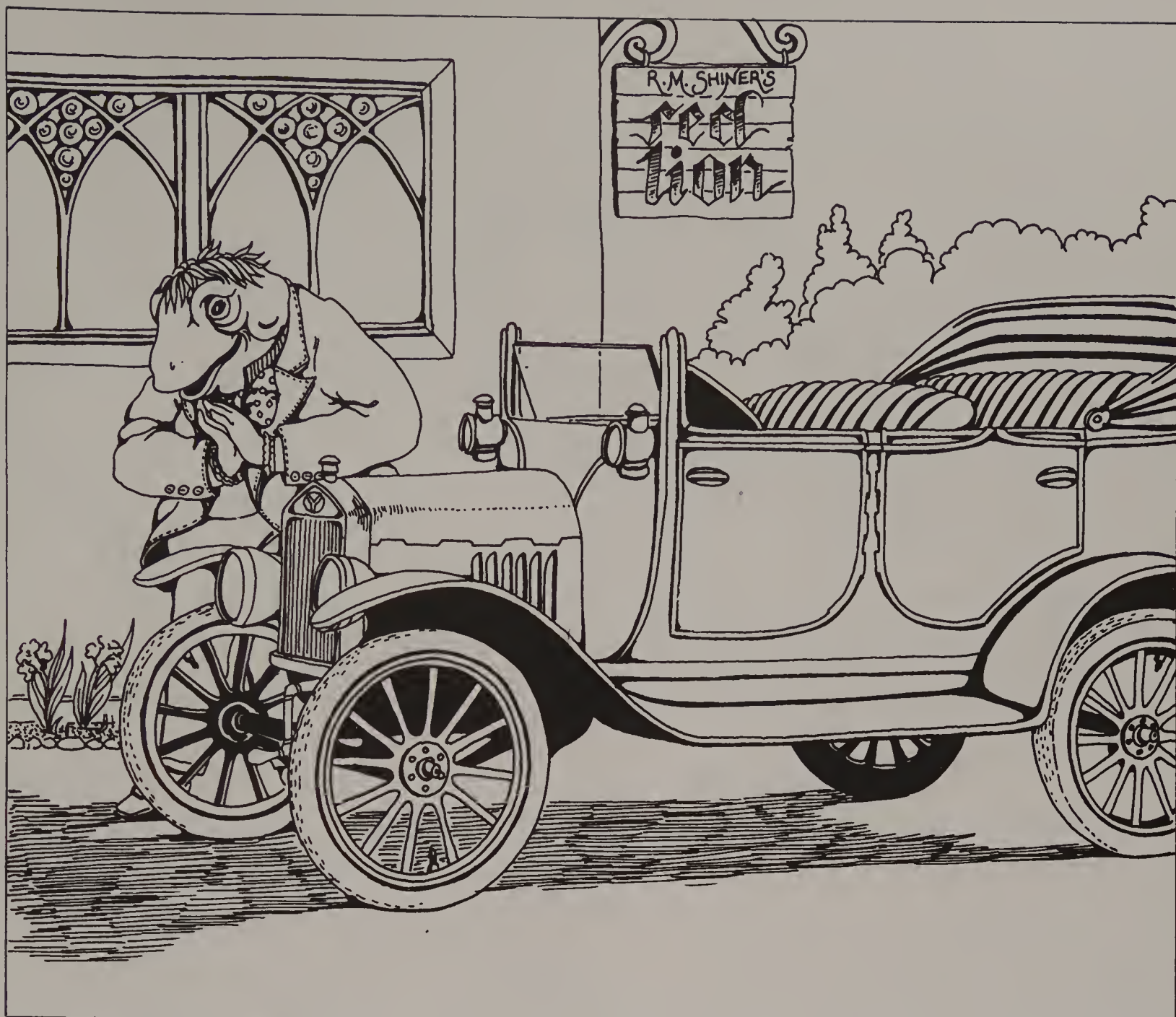
"He did *you* awfully well!" rejoined the Badger hotly. "One comfort is, we're free now, and needn't waste any more of our precious time doing sentry-go. But we'd better continue to sleep at Toad Hall for a while longer. Toad may be brought back at any moment—on a stretcher, or between two policemen."

Meanwhile, Toad, gay and irresponsible, was walking briskly along the high road, some miles from home. Feeling safe from recapture, he almost danced along the road in his satisfaction and conceit.

"Smart piece of work that!" he remarked to himself, chuckling. "Poor old Ratty! Won't he catch it when the Badger gets back!" He strode along till he reached a little town, where the sign of "The Red Lion" reminded him that he had not breakfasted that day. He marched into the inn, ordered the best luncheon, and sat down to eat it in the coffee-room.

He was about half-way through his meal when an only too familiar sound made him start and fall a-trembling all over. The poop-poop! drew nearer and nearer, the car could be heard to turn into the inn-yard and come to a stop, and Toad had to hold on to the leg of the table to conceal his overmastering emotion. When the group, hungry, talkative and gay, entered the coffee-room, Toad listened, all ears; at last he could stand it no longer. He slipped out of the room quietly. "There cannot be any harm," he said to himself, "in my only just *looking* at it!"

The car stood in the middle of the yard, quite unattended. Toad walked slowly round it, inspecting, criticizing, musing deeply. "I



wonder," he said to himself presently, "if this sort of car *starts* easily?" Next moment, hardly knowing how it came about, he found he had hold of the handle and was turning it. The old passion seized on Toad and completely mastered him. As if in a dream he found himself seated in the driver's seat; as if in a dream, he pulled the lever; all sense of right and wrong seemed suspended. He increased his pace, and as the car devoured the street and leapt forth on the high road through the open country, he was only conscious that he was Toad once more, Toad at his best and highest, Toad the terror, the traffic-queller, before whom all must give way or be smitten into nothingness and everlasting night.



"To my mind," observed the Chairman of the Bench of Magistrates cheerfully, "the *only* difficulty that presents itself is, how we can possibly make it sufficiently hot for the incorrigible rogue and hardened ruffian whom we see cowering in the dock before us. He has been found guilty, first, of stealing a valuable motor-car; secondly, of driving to the public danger; and, thirdly, of gross impertinence to the rural police. Mr. Clerk, what is the stiffest penalty for each?"

The Clerk scratched his nose with his pen. "Supposing twelve months for the theft, which is mild; and three years for the furious driving, which is lenient; and fifteen years for the cheek, which was pretty bad sort of cheek, judging by what we've heard—that adds up to nineteen years—Make it twenty and be on the safe side."

"An excellent suggestion!" said the Chairman approvingly. "Prisoner! Try to stand up straight. It's going to be twenty years this time."

And mind, if you appear before us again, we shall have to deal with you very seriously!" Then the brutal minions of the law fell upon the hapless Toad; loaded him with chains, and dragged him from the Court House, shrieking, praying, protesting; across the market-place, where the playful populace assailed him with jeers, carrots, and popular catch-words; across the hollow-sounding drawbridge, below the spiky portcullis, past guardrooms full of grinning soldiery off duty, past sentries who coughed in a horrid sarcastic way; across courtyards, where mastiffs strained at their leash; past the rack-chamber and the thumb-screw-room.

The rusty key creaked in the lock, the great door clanged behind them; and Toad was a helpless prisoner in the remotest dungeon of the best-guarded keep of the stoutest castle in all the length and breadth of Merry England.





When Toad found himself immured in a dank and noisome dungeon, he flung himself at full length on the floor, and shed bitter tears, and abandoned himself to dark despair. "This is the end of everything" (he said), "at least of the career of Toad, which is the same thing; the popular and handsome Toad, the Toad so free and careless and debonair! Stupid animal that I was not to listen to wise old Badger, clever, intelligent Rat or sensible Mole!" Thus he passed several weeks, refusing his meals, though the grim and ancient jailer, knowing that Toad's pockets were well lined, frequently pointed out that many comforts, and indeed luxuries, could be sent in—at a price—from outside.

Now the jailer had a daughter, a pleasant wench and good-hearted, who assisted her father. Pitying the misery of Toad, she said to her father one day, "Father! I can't bear to see that poor beast so unhappy, and getting so thin! Let me have the managing of him. You know how fond of animals I am. I'll make him eat from my hand, and sit up, and do all sorts of things." That day she knocked at the door of Toad's cell.

"Do try and eat a bit of dinner," she said. "See, I've brought you some of mine, hot from the oven!"

It was bubble and squeak, beef and cabbage, and while Toad refused to be comforted, the penetrating smell reached Toad's nose, and gave him the idea that perhaps life was not such a blank and desperate thing as he had imagined. When the girl returned, some hours later, she carried a tray, with a cup of fragrant tea steaming on it; and a plate piled up with very hot buttered toast, cut thick, very brown on both sides, with the butter running through the holes in it in great golden drops, like honey from the honeycomb. The smell of that buttered toast talked to Toad of warm kitchens, of breakfasts on bright frosty mornings, of cosy parlor firesides on winter evenings. This time he dried his eyes, sipped his tea and munched his toast, and soon began talking freely about himself. The jailer's daughter encouraged him. "Tell me about Toad Hall," she said.

"Toad Hall," said Toad proudly, "is an eligible self-contained gentleman's residence with up-to-date sanitation, large banqueting-hall"—a good comfortable place, not like the outside world—the Wild Wood, where stoats, weasels, foxes and other wild animals lived.

"Bless the animal," said the girl, laughing, "I don't want to rent it." When she said good night, Toad was very much the same sanguine, self-satisfied animal that he had been of old. He sang a little song or



two, of the sort he used to sing at his dinner-parties, curled himself up in the straw, and had an excellent night's rest and the pleasantest of dreams. In his vanity, he thought that the interest of the jailer's daughter proceeded from a growing tenderness; and he could not help half regretting that the social gulf between them was so very wide, for she was a comely lass, and evidently admired him very much.

One morning the girl was very thoughtful. "Toad," she said presently, "just listen, please. I have an aunt who is a washerwoman."

"There, there," said Toad graciously and affably, "never mind, I have several aunts who *ought* to be washerwomen."

"As I said, my aunt is a washerwoman, and does the washing for all the prisoners in this castle, taking it out on Monday morning, and bringing it in on Friday evening. This is Thursday. You're very rich and she's very poor. Now, if she were properly approached—squared, I believe is the word you animals use—you could come to some arrangement by which she would let you have her dress and bonnet, and you

could escape from the castle as the official washerwoman. You're very alike in many respects—particularly about the figure."

"We're not," said the Toad in a huff. "I have a very elegant figure—for what I am."

"So has my aunt," replied the girl, "for what *she* is."

"You surely wouldn't have Mr. Toad, of Toad Hall, going about the country disguised as a washerwoman!"

"Then you can stop here as a Toad," replied the girl with much spirit, and Toad had to admit the girl was right. Next evening the girl ushered her aunt into Toad's cell, bearing his week's washing. The old lady had been prepared beforehand, and the sight of certain golden sovereigns that Toad had thoughtfully placed on the table left little further to discuss. Toad received a cotton print gown, an apron, a shawl, and a rusty black bonnet; the only stipulation the old lady made being that she should be gagged and bound in a corner, in order to retain her situation, in spite of the suspicious appearance of things.

Toad was delighted with the suggestion. It would enable him to leave the prison in some style, and with his reputation for being a desperate fellow untarnished; and he readily helped the jailer's daughter tie up her aunt gently. Then, shaking with laughter, the girl proceeded to "hook-and-eye" him into the cotton print gown, arranged the shawl with a professional fold, and tied the strings of the rusty bonnet under his chin.

"You're the very image of her," she giggled, "only I'm sure you never looked half so respectable in all your life before. Now, good-bye, Toad, and good luck. If anyone says anything to you, as they probably will, being but men, you can chaff back a bit, but remember you're a widow woman, quite alone in the world, with a character to lose."





With a quaking heart, but as firm a footstep as he could command, Toad set forth cautiously on what seemed to be a most hare-brained and hazardous undertaking; but he was soon agreeably surprised to find how easy everything was made for him, and a little humbled at the thought that both his popularity, and the sex that seemed to inspire it, were really another's. The chaff and the humorous sallies to which he was subjected, formed his chief danger; for Toad was an animal with a strong sense of his own dignity, and the chaff was mostly (he thought) poor and clumsy, and the humor of the sallies entirely lacking. However, he kept his temper, though with great difficulty, and did his best not to overstep the limits of good taste.

It seemed hours before he crossed the last courtyard and dodged the outspread arms of the last warder, pleading with simulated passion for just one farewell embrace. But at last he heard the wicketgate in the great outer door click behind him, felt the fresh air of the outer world upon his anxious brow, and knew that he was free!

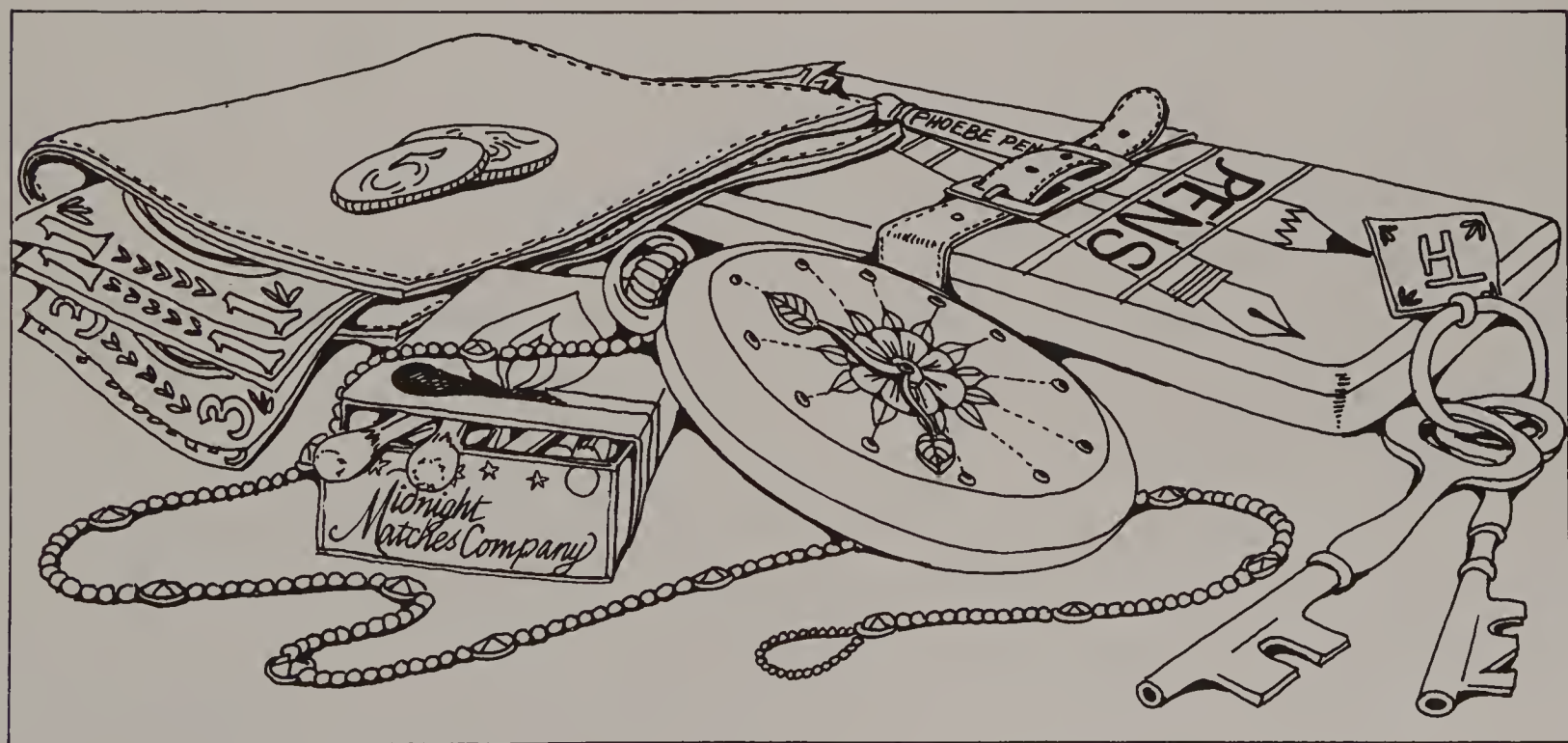


As he walked quickly toward the town, his attention was caught by some red and green lights on this side of it, and the sound of the puffing and snorting of engines and the banging of shunted trucks fell on his ear. "Aha!" he thought, "this is a piece of luck! A railway-station is the thing I want most in the world at this moment." He made his way to the station, consulted a time-table, and found that a train, bound in his direction, was due to start in half an hour. "More luck!" said Toad, his spirits rising rapidly, and went off to the booking-office to buy his ticket.

He gave the name of the station that he knew to be nearest to Toad Hall, and mechanically put his fingers, in search of the necessary money, where his waistcoat pocket should have been. But here the cotton gown, which had nobly stood by him so far, and which he had basely forgotten, intervened, and frustrated his efforts. In a sort of night-

mare he struggled with the strange uncanny thing that seemed to hold his hands, turn all muscular strivings to water, and laugh at him all the time; while other travellers, forming up in a line behind, waited with impatience, making suggestions of more or less value and comments of more or less stringency and point. At last—somehow—he never rightly understood how—he burst the barriers, attained the goal, arrived at where all waistcoat pockets are eternally situated, and found—not only no money, but no pocket to hold it, and no waistcoat to hold the pocket!

To his horror he recollected that he had left both coat and waistcoat behind him in his cell, and with them his pocket-book, money, keys, watch, matches, pencil-case—all that makes life worth living, all that distinguishes the many-pocketed animal, the lord of creation, from the inferior one-pocketed or no-pocketed productions that hop about. In his misery he made one desperate effort, and, with a return to his fine old manner—a blend of the Squire and the College Don—he said, “Look here! I find I’ve left my purse behind. Just give me that ticket, will you, and I’ll send the money on to-morrow. I’m well known in these parts.”



The clerk stared at him and the rusty black bonnet, and then laughed. "I should think you were pretty well known in these parts," he said, "if you've tried this game often. Here, stand away from the window, please, madam; you're obstructing the other passengers!" An old gentleman who had been prodding Toad in the back now addressed him as his good woman, which angered Toad more than anything that had occurred that evening.

Baffled and full of despair, he wandered blindly down the platform where the train was standing, and tears trickled down each side of his nose. It was hard, he thought, to be within sight of safety and almost of home, and to be balked by the want of a few wretched shillings and by the pettifogging mistrustfulness of paid officials. What was to be done? He was not swift of foot; his figure was unfortunately recognizable. Could he not squeeze under the seat of a carriage? As he pondered, he found himself opposite the engine, which was being oiled, wiped, and generally caressed by its affectionate driver, a burly man with an oil-can in one hand and a lump of cotton-waste in the other.

"Hullo, mother!" said the engine-driver, "what's the trouble? You don't look particularly cheerful."

"O, sir!" said Toad, crying afresh, "I am a poor unhappy washer-woman, and I've lost all my money, and can't pay for a ticket, and I *must* get home to-night somehow, and whatever I am to do I don't know. O dear, O dear!"

"That's a bad business, indeed," said the engine-driver reflectively. "Lost your money—and can't get home—and got some kids too, waiting for you, I dare say?"

"Any amount of 'em," sobbed Toad. "And they'll be hungry—and playing with matches—and upsetting lamps, the little innocents!—and quarreling, and going on generally. O dear, O dear!"

"Well, I'll tell you what I'll do," said the good engine-driver.



"You're a washerwoman and I'm an engine-driver, terribly dirty work. If you'll wash a few shirts for me when you get home, and send 'em along, I'll give you a ride on my engine."

The Toad's misery turned into rapture as he eagerly scrambled up into the cab of the engine. Of course, he had never washed a shirt in his life, and wasn't going to begin; but he thought: "When I get safely home to Toad Hall, I will send the engine-driver some money for washing."

As the train moved out of the station, Toad could see on either side of him real fields and trees, and hedges, all flying past him, and every minute bringing him nearer to Toad Hall, and sympathetic friends, and money to chink in his pocket, and a soft bed to sleep in. He began to skip up and down and shout and sing snatches of song, to the great

astonishment of the engine-driver, who had come across washerwomen before, at long intervals, but never one at all like this.

But soon the engine-driver frowned and looked behind him. "It's very strange; we're the last train running in this direction tonight, yet I could have sworn that I heard another following us!"

Toad ceased his frivolous antics at once. He became grave and depressed, and a dull pain in the lower part of his spine made him want to sit down and try desperately not to think of all the possibilities.

"I can see it clearly now!" said the engine-driver. "It is an engine, on our rails, coming along at a great pace! And the engine is crowded with the queerest lot of people! Men like ancient warders, waving halberds; policemen in their helmets, waving truncheons, and shabbily dressed men in pot-hats, obvious and unmistakable plain-clothes detectives. They're gaining on us fast!"



Then Toad fell on his knees and, raising his clasped paws in supplication, cried, "Save me, only save me, dear kind Mr. Engine-driver, and I will confess everything! I am not the simple washerwoman I seem to be! I have no children waiting for me, innocent or otherwise! I am a toad—the well-known and popular Mr. Toad, a landed proprietor; I have just escaped, by my great daring and cleverness, from a loathsome dungeon into which my enemies had flung me; and if those fellows on that engine recapture me, it will be chains and bread-and-water and straw and misery once more for poor, unhappy, innocent Toad! I only borrowed a motor-car while the owners were at lunch. I didn't mean to steal it."

The engine-driver looked very grave. "I fear that you have been indeed a wicked toad, but the sight of an animal in tears always makes me feel queer and soft-hearted. So cheer up, Toad! I'll do my best, and we may beat them yet!" They piled on more coals, shovelling furiously; the furnace roared, the sparks flew, the engine leapt and swung, but still their pursuers gained. The engine-driver wiped his brow and said, "I'm afraid it's no good, Toad. You see, they are running light, and they have the better engine." There was only one thing to do, he said. He would speed up on the approach to the next tunnel (where the other train would slow up) and then slow down suddenly opposite a thick wood and give Toad a chance to jump off.

It was done as they planned. The driver shut off steam and put on brakes, the Toad got down on the step, and as the train slowed he heard the driver call out, "Now, jump!" Toad jumped, rolled down a short embankment, scrambled into the wood and watched as his train disappeared and the pursuing engine, her motley crew waving their various weapons and shouting, "Stop! stop! stop!" roared past. Toad had a hearty laugh—the first since he was thrown into prison.



But he soon stopped laughing when he came to consider that it was now very late and dark and cold, and he was in an unknown wood. After so many weeks within walls, he found the wood strange and unfriendly and inclined, he thought, to make fun of him. Night-jars sounded their mechanical rattle, and an owl brushed his shoulder and laughed ho! ho! ho! which Toad thought in very poor taste. Once he met a fox, who stopped, looked him up and down in a sarcastic sort of way, and said, "Hullo, washerwoman! Half a pair of socks and a pillow-case short this week! Mind it doesn't occur again!" and swaggered off, sniggering. Toad looked about for a stone to throw at him, but could not succeed in finding one, which vexed him more than anything. At last, cold, hungry, and tired out, he sought the shelter of a hollow tree, where with branches and dead leaves he made himself as comfortable a bed as he could, and slept soundly till the morning.

The next morning Toad woke with a start, combed the leaves out of his hair, and marched forth cold but confident, hungry but hopeful, all nervous terrors dispelled by rest and sleep. He began looking for someone to talk to, who could tell him clearly which way to go to get home.

The rustic road down which he walked was presently joined by a canal, which ambled peacefully along its side. Round a bend in the canal came plodding a solitary horse with a long towline attached to his collar, and then came the barge the horse was pulling. Toad stood waiting for what the fates were sending.

With a pleasant swirl of quiet water at its blunt bow the barge slid up alongside of him, its gaily painted gunwale level with the towing-path, its sole occupant a big stout woman wearing a linen sun-bonnet, one brawny arm laid along the tiller. "A nice morning, ma'am!" she remarked to Toad, as she drew up level with him.





"I dare say it is, ma'am!" responded Toad politely, "to them that's not in sore trouble, like what I am. Here's my married daughter, she sends off to me post-haste to come to her at once; so off I comes, not knowing what may be happening or going to happen, but fearing the worst, as you will understand, ma'am, if you're a mother, too. And I've left my business to look after itself—I'm in the washing and laundering line, you must know, ma'am—and I've left my young children to look after themselves, and I've lost all my money, and lost my way, and as for what may be happening to my married daughter—she lives near to the river, ma'am, close to a fine house called Toad Hall."

"Toad Hall? Why, I'm going that way myself," replied the barge-woman. "I'll give you a lift."

Toad, with many humble and grateful acknowledgments, stepped lightly on board and sat down with great satisfaction. "Toad's luck again!" thought he. "I always come out on top!"

"So you're in the washing business, ma'am?" said the barge-woman politely, as they glided along. "A very good business you've got."

"Finest business in the whole country," said Toad airily. "I love washing. Never so happy as when I've got both arms in the wash-tub."

"What a bit of luck, meeting you!" observed the barge-woman.

"Why, what do you mean?" asked Toad nervously.

"Well," replied the barge-woman, "I like washing, too, just the same as you do, but my husband went off hunting for a rabbit, leaving the barge to me, and how am I to do my washing? There's a heap of things of mine that you'll find in a corner of the cabin. You'll find a tub handy, and soap, and a kettle on the stove, and a bucket to haul up water from the canal with. Then I shall know you're enjoying yourself, instead of sitting here idle, looking at the scenery and yawning your head off."

"Here, let me steer!" said Toad, now thoroughly frightened, "and then you can get on with your washing your own way. I might spoil your things, or not do 'em as you like. I'm more used to gentlemen's things."

"Let you steer?" replied the barge-woman, laughing. "It takes some practice to steer a barge properly."

Toad was fairly cornered, and sullenly resigned himself to his fate. "If it comes to that," he thought in desperation, "I suppose any fool can *wash*!" He fetched tub, soap, and other necessities from the cabin, selected a few garments at random. A long half-hour passed, and every minute of it saw Toad getting crosser. Nothing that he could do to these things seemed to please them or do them good. He tried coaxing, he tried slapping, he tried punching; they smiled back at him out of the tub unconverted, happy in their original sin. His back ached badly, and he noticed with dismay that his paws were beginning to get all crinkly. He muttered words that should never pass the lips of either washerwomen or Toads; and lost the soap, for the fiftieth time.

A burst of laughter made him straighten himself and look around. The barge-woman was laughing unrestrainedly. "I've been watching you all the time," she gasped. "Pretty washer-woman you are! Never washed so much as a dish-clout in your life, I'll lay!"



Toad's temper boiled over. "You common, low, *fat* barge-woman!" he shouted; "don't you dare to talk to your betters like that! Washer-woman indeed! I would have you to know that I am a Toad, a very well-known, respected, distinguished Toad! I may be under a bit of a cloud at present, but I will *not* be laughed at by a barge-woman!"

The woman moved nearer to him and peered under his bonnet keenly and closely. "Why, so you are!" she cried. "A horrid, nasty, crawly Toad! And in my nice clean barge, too! Now that is a thing that I will *not* have." She relinquished the tiller for a moment. One big mottled arm shot out and caught Toad by a fore-leg, while the other gripped him fast by a hind-leg. Toad found himself flying through the air.

The water, when he reached it, proved quite cold enough for his taste, though its chill was not sufficient to quell his proud spirit, or slake the heat of his furious temper. He rose to the surface spluttering, and when he had wiped the duckweed out of his eyes the first thing he saw was the fat barge-woman looking back at him laughing; and he vowed to be even with her. Onshore he had to take a minute or two's rest to recover his breath; then gathering his wet skirts well over his arms, he started to run after the barge as fast as his legs would carry him.

The barge-woman was still laughing when he drew up level with her. "Put yourself through your mangle, washerwoman," she called out, "and iron your face and crimp it, and you'll pass for quite a decent-looking Toad!"

Toad never paused to reply. Solid revenge was what he wanted, not cheap, windy, verbal triumphs, though he had a thing or two in his mind that he would have liked to say. He saw what he wanted ahead of him. Running swiftly he overtook the horse, unfastened the tow-rope, jumped lightly on the horse's back, and urged it to a gallop by kicking it vigorously in the sides. The barge-woman was gesticulating wildly



and shouting, "Stop, stop, stop!" "I've heard that song before," said Toad, laughing, as he continued to spur his steed onward on its wild career.

He had travelled some miles, his horse and he, and he was feeling drowsy in the hot sunshine, when the horse stopped, lowered his head, and began to nibble the grass. Toad was on a wide common, dotted with patches of gorse. Near him stood a dingy gipsy caravan, and beside it a man was sitting on a bucket turned upside down, very busy smoking and staring into the wide world. Out of the pot on the fire came forth bubblings and gurglings—also smells that twined and twisted and wreathed themselves at last into one complete, voluptuous, perfect smell that seemed like the very soul of Nature taking form and appearing to her children. Toad now knew well that he had not been really hungry



before. What he had felt earlier in the day had been a mere trifling qualm.

The gipsy took his pipe out of his mouth and remarked, "Want to sell that there horse of yours?"

Toad was completely taken aback. It had not occurred to him to turn the horse into cash, but the gipsy's suggestion seemed to smooth the way towards the two things he wanted so badly—ready money and a solid breakfast. "What?" he said, "me sell this beautiful young horse of mine? Who's going to take the washing home to my customers? Besides, this fine horse is a cut above you altogether. He's a blood horse, he is, partly; not the part you see, of course—another part. All the same, how much might you be disposed to offer?"

The gipsy looked the horse over, and then he looked Toad over with equal care. "Shillin' a leg," he said briefly.

"A shilling a leg?" cried Toad. "If you please, I must take a little time to work that out, and see just what it comes to." He climbed down off his horse, and sat down by the gipsy, and did sums on his fingers, and at last he said, "A shilling a leg? Why, that comes to exactly four shillings, and no more. O no; I could not think of accepting four shillings for this beautiful young horse of mine."

"Well," said the gipsy, "I'll tell you what I will do. I'll make it five shillings, and that's three-and-sixpence more than the animal's worth." Toad, however, was very hungry (and the horse actually hadn't cost him anything) so he proposed a figure of six shillings and sixpence, plus as much breakfast as he could possibly eat.

The gipsy grumbled, but agreed. After counting out six shillings and sixpence into Toad's paw, he tilted up the pot, and a glorious steam of hot rich stew gurgled into the plate. It was, indeed, the most beautiful stew in the world, being made of partridges, and pheasants, and chickens, and hares, and rabbits, and peahens, and guinea-fowls, and one or

two other things. Toad took the plate on his lap, almost crying, and stuffed, and stuffed, and stuffed. Then he got up and said good-bye to the gipsy, and took an affectionate farewell of the horse; and the gipsy gave him directions which way to go. He was, indeed, a very different Toad from the animal of an hour ago. The sun was shining brightly, he had money in his pocket once more, and, most and best of all, he had had a substantial meal, hot and nourishing. "What a clever Toad I am!" he thought. "My enemies shut me up in prison; I walk out through them all. They pursue me with engines and policemen; I snap my fingers at them, and vanish. I am thrown into a canal by a woman fat of body and very evil-minded. I swim ashore, I seize her horse, I ride off in triumph." He sang at the top of his voice:



*"The world has held great Heroes,
As history-books have showed;
But never a name to go down to fame
Compared with that of Toad!*

*"The Queen and her Ladies-in-waiting
Sat at the window and sewed.
She cried, 'Look! who's that handsome man?'
They answered, 'Mr. Toad.' "*

There was a great deal more of the same sort, but too dreadfully conceited to be written down. These are some of the milder verses.

He sang as he walked, and he walked as he sang, and got more inflated every minute. But his pride was shortly to have a severe fall.

After some miles he reached the high road, and as he turned into it and glanced along its white length, he saw approaching him a speck that turned into a dot and then into a blob; a double note of warning, only too well known, fell on his delighted ear.

"This is something like!" said the excited Toad. "I will hail them, my brothers of the wheel, and pitch them a yarn, of the sort that has been so successful hitherto; and they will give me a lift. Perhaps, with luck, it may even end in my driving up to Toad Hall in a motor-car! That will be one in the eye for Badger!"

He stepped confidently out into the road to hail the motor-car; when suddenly he became very pale, his heart turned to water, his knees shook and yielded under him, and he doubled up and collapsed with a sickening pain in his interior. And well he might, for the approaching car was the very one he had stolen out of the yard of the Red Lion Hotel on that fatal day when all his troubles began! And the people in it were the same people he had sat and watched at luncheon in the coffee-room!

He sank down in a shabby, miserable heap in the road, murmuring, "It's all up! It's all over now! Chains and policemen again! Prison again! Dry bread and water again! O, what a fool I have been!"

The terrible motor-car drew slowly nearer and stopped. Two gentlemen got out and walked round the trembling heap of crumpled misery lying in the road, and one of them said, "O dear! this is very sad! Here



is a poor old thing—a washerwoman apparently—who has fainted in the road! Let us lift her into the car and take her to the nearest village, where doubtless she has friends.”

They tenderly lifted Toad into the motor-car and propped him up with soft cushions, and proceeded on their way. When Toad knew he was not recognized, he cautiously opened first one eye and then the other. “Look!” said one of the gentlemen, “she is better already. The fresh air is doing her good. How do you feel now, ma’am?”

“Thank you kindly, sir,” said Toad in a feeble voice, “I’m feeling a great deal better!”

“That’s right,” said the gentleman. “Now keep quite still, and, above all, don’t try to talk.”

“I won’t,” said Toad. “I was only thinking, if I might sit on the

front seat there, beside the driver, where I could get the fresh air full in my face, I should soon be all right again."

"What a very sensible woman!" said the gentleman. "Of course you shall." They carefully helped Toad into the front seat beside the driver, and on they went once more.

Toad was almost himself again by now. He sat up and tried to beat down the tremors, the yearnings, the old cravings that beset him and took possession of him entirely. "Please, sir," he said to the driver, "I wish you would kindly let me try and drive the car for a little. I've been watching you carefully, and it looks so easy and so interesting."

The driver laughed at the proposal, so heartily that one gentleman inquired what the matter was. When he heard, he said, to Toad's delight, "Bravo, ma'am! I like your spirit. Let her have a try. She won't do any harm." Toad scrambled into the seat vacated by the driver, took the steering-wheel in his hands, listened with affected humility to the instructions, and set the car in motion. The gentlemen behind clapped their hands, and Toad heard them saying, "How well she does it! Fancy a washerwoman driving a car as well as that, the first time!"

Toad went a little faster; then faster still, and faster. He heard the gentlemen call out warningly, "Be careful, washerwoman!" And this annoyed him, and he began to lose his head.

The driver tried to interfere, but he pinned him down in his seat with one elbow, and put on full speed. The rush of air in his face, the hum of the engine, and the jump of the car beneath him intoxicated his weak brain. "Washerwoman, indeed!" he shouted recklessly. "Ho! ho! I am the Toad, the motor-car snatcher, the Toad who always escapes! Sit still, and you shall know what driving really is, for you are in the hands of the famous, the skillful, the entirely fearless Toad!"



With a cry of horror the whole party rose and flung themselves on him. "Seize him!" they cried, "seize the Toad, the wicked animal who



stole our motor-car! Bind him, chain him!" With a half-turn of the wheel the Toad sent the car crashing through the low hedge that ran along the roadside. One mighty bound, a violent shock, and the wheels of the car were churning up the thick mud of a horse-pond.

Toad found himself flying through the air, and was just beginning to wonder whether he would turn into a Toadbird, when he landed on his back with a thump, in the soft rich grass of a meadow. He set off running across country, scrambling through hedges, jumping ditches, pounding across fields, till he had to settle down into an easy walk. When he had recovered his breath, he began to giggle, and from giggling he took to laughing, and he laughed till he had to sit down under a hedge. "Ho, ho!" he cried, "Toad again, Toad, as usual, comes out on top!"

*"The motor-car went Poop-poop-poop
As it raced along the road.
Who was it steered it into a pond?
Ingenious Mr. Toad!*

O, how clever I am! How clever, how clever, how very clever——"

A slight noise at a distance behind him made him turn his head and look. O horror! O misery! O despair!

About two fields off, a chauffeur in his leather gaiters and two large rural policemen were visible, running towards him as hard as they could





go! Poor Toad sprang to his feet and pelted away again, his heart in his mouth. "O my!" he gasped, "what an *ass* I am! What a *conceited* and heedless ass! Swaggering again! Shouting and singing songs again! Sitting still and gassing again! O my! O my! O my!"

He glanced back, and saw to his dismay that they were gaining on him. He did his best, but he was a fat animal, and his legs were short, and still they gained. Ceasing to heed where he was going, he struggled on blindly when suddenly the earth failed under his feet, and, splash! he found himself head over ears in deep water, water that bore him along, and he knew that in his blind panic he had run straight into the river!

He tried to grasp the reeds and the rushes, but the stream was so strong it tore them out of his hands. "O my!" gasped poor Toad, "if ever I steal a motor-car again! If ever I sing another conceited song—" Presently he saw that he was approaching a big dark hole in the bank, and he reached up with a paw and held on. Slowly he drew himself up out of the water, and rested with his elbows on the hole, puffing and panting.

As he stared before him into the dark hole, some bright small thing shone and twinkled in its depths, moving toward him. As it approached, a face grew up gradually around it, and it was a familiar face!

Brown and small, with whiskers.

Grave and round, with neat ears and silky hair.

It was the Water Rat!



The Rat put out a neat little brown paw, gripped Toad firmly by the scruff of the neck, and the water-logged Toad came up slowly but surely over the edge of the hole, till at last he stood safe and sound in the hall of Rat's house. "O, Ratty!" he began. "I've been through such times since I saw you last, you can't think! Such trials, such sufferings, and all so nobly borne!"



"Toad," said the Water Rat, gravely, "you go off upstairs at once, and take off that old cotton rag that looks as if it might formerly have belonged to some washerwoman, and try to come down looking like a gentleman. Then I have serious news for you."

After Toad had changed his clothes and told his adventures over an excellent breakfast, his joy turned to sorrow when Rat told him the bad news he had been holding back.

While Toad had been in prison, the stoats and weasels—the Wild Wooders—knowing of his absence, had taken over Toad Hall. When Toad heard that, a large tear welled up in each of his eyes. "Go on, Ratty," he murmured presently; "how did it happen?"

One dark night, when the Mole and the Badger were sitting by the fire in the smoking-room (Rat told him), hundreds of stoats and weasels—claiming Toad would never get out of jail and needed to be taught a lesson—had suddenly descended upon Toad Hall. There they had beaten Mole and Badger with sticks and turned them out into the cold. "And the Wild Wooders have been living there ever since, Toad, eating

your grub, drinking your drink, and making bad jokes about you."

"O, have they!" said Toad, seizing a stick, and before Rat could stop him he started rapidly down the road toward Toad Hall to see for himself, only to be stopped by a yellow ferret sentry who fired a bullet directly over Toad's head.

"What did I tell you?" said the Rat, when Toad returned. "It's no good. They've got sentries posted, and they are all armed." Perhaps Mole and the Badger would have some ideas when they arrived. "While you were riding about the country in expensive motor-cars," said Rat, "those two poor devoted animals have been camping out in the open, in every sort of weather, keeping a constant eye on the stoats and the weasels. You don't deserve to have such true and loyal friends, Toad, you don't, really."

"I'm an ungrateful beast, I know," sobbed Toad.

When Mole and Badger knocked at the door, Toad found he was nervous, but they greeted him warmly. "Hooray! Here's old Toad!"



cried the Mole, his face beaming.

"You must have managed to escape!" said Badger.

But Badger and Mole grew grim when they told about the strength of the stoats and the weasels in Toad Hall. "It's useless to think of attacking the place," said Mole. "They're too strong for us."

"However," Badger added quietly, leaning forward impressively, "there—is—an—underground-passage, one Toad doesn't know about, that leads from the river bank, right up into the middle of Toad Hall." Toad was skeptical, but they finally convinced him even *he* didn't know everything about Toad Hall; and they decided to attack the next night, when the weasels would be gathered in the banqueting-hall, celebrating the Chief Weasel's birthday. "They'll be eating and drinking, suspecting nothing—no guns, no swords, no sticks." And one could bypass the sentries completely.

The next morning Toad awoke, greatly thrilled by the forthcoming events, and after breakfast (from which Mole was strangely absent), practiced swinging a stout stick. "I'll learn 'em!" he said.

"Don't say 'learn 'em,' Toad," said the Rat, greatly shocked. "It's 'I'll teach 'em.' "

"But we don't *want* to teach 'em," replied the Badger. "We want to *learn* 'em."

Presently the Mole came tumbling into the room evidently very pleased with himself. "I've been talking to the sentries!" he said. He had found Toad's old washerwoman dress, and put it on with the bonnet, and gone out where the sentries were. "Run away, washerwoman," they had said, "we don't want any washing done." "It won't be *me* that will be running away," Mole had said; "not when those hundred blood-thirsty Badgers attack Toad Hall tonight." The sentries had started to tremble, hearing this, running all ways at once, and Mole had come back home.

At first it seemed as though Mole had spoiled everything; then the sense of it began to appear. "Mole," said Badger, "I perceive you have more sense in your little finger than some animals have in the whole of their fat bodies."

When it began to grow dark, the Badger took a dark lantern in one paw, grasped his great stick with the other, and said, "Now then, follow me!" He led them along by the river for a little way, and then suddenly swung himself over the edge into a hole in the river bank, a little above the water. At last they were in the secret passage, and the cutting-out expedition had really begun!

It was cold, and dark, and damp, and low, and narrow, and poor Toad began to shiver, partly from dread of what might be before them, partly because he was wet through. The lantern was far ahead, and when Rat called warningly, "*Come on, Toad!*" he "*came on*" with such a rush that Rat bumped into Mole and Mole into Badger. At last the Badger said, "We ought by now to be pretty nearly under the Hall."

Then suddenly they heard, apparently nearly over their heads, a confused murmur of sound, as if people were shouting and cheering and hammering on tables. The passage now began to slope upwards, and they hurried along it till they found themselves standing under the trap-door that led up into the butler's pantry. A tremendous noise was going on in the banqueting-hall as they hoisted each other up into the pantry, with only a door between them and their carousing enemies.

Someone was proposing a toast, and Toad was particularly chagrined when he heard them singing a song (which was not really very funny) about "their absent host, Mr. Toad."

"Only let me get at him!" muttered Toad, grinding his teeth.

The Badger took a firm grip of his stick with both paws, glanced



round at his comrades, and cried—"The hour is come! Follow me!" And flung the door open wide.

My! What a squealing and a squeaking and a screeching filled the air! Well might the terrified weasels dive under the tables and spring madly up at the windows! Well might the ferrets rush wildly for the fireplace and get hopelessly jammed in the chimney! Well might tables and chairs be upset, and glass and china be sent crashing on the floor, in the panic of that terrible moment when the four Heroes strode wrathfully into the room! The mighty Badger, his whiskers bristling; Mole,



black and grim; Rat, desperate and determined; Toad, frenzied with excitement and injured pride, emitting Toad-whoops that chilled them to the marrow! "Toad he went a-pleasuring!" he yelled. "I'll pleasure 'em!" and he went straight for the Chief Weasel. They were but four in all, but to the panic-stricken weasels the hall seemed full of monstrous animals, grey, black, brown, and yellow, and they broke and fled with squeals of terror and dismay.

The affair was soon over. Up and down the whole length of the hall strode the four Friends, whacking with their sticks; and in five minutes the room was cleared. Through the broken windows the shrieks of terrified weasels escaping were borne faintly to their ears.

They soon learned that the sentries, already jumpy and nervous about the hundreds of bloodthirsty Badgers they were expecting, fled when they heard the uproar indoors. The few who remained, seeing the weasels leaving the Hall, assumed they were betrayed, and fought against the weasels until both groups rolled into the river and disappeared.

The few weasel prisoners the four Friends had captured were told by Mole to clean up the mess they had made. "See that you sweep *under* the beds and put hot water, and clean towels, and fresh cakes of soap in each room." The weasels kept saying how sorry they were for the trouble they had caused, so that Mole, instead of giving them a beating, gave them a roll apiece as they left.





"Excellent and deserving animal, Mole!" said the Badger. Toad (who had wished more praise of his *own* courage), added, "Thank you kindly, dear Mole, for all your pains and trouble, and especially for your cleverness this morning." The Badger was pleased at that, and said, "There spoke my brave Toad!" So they finished their supper in great joy and contentment, and presently retired to rest between clean sheets, safe in Toad's ancestral home, won back by matchless valor, consummate strategy, and a proper handling of sticks.

The next morning Toad was about to linger over his breakfast when Badger said, "I'm sorry, Toad, but I'm afraid there's a heavy morning's work in front of you. You see, we really ought to have a Banquet at once, to celebrate this affair. It's expected of you."

"O, all right!" said the Toad readily. "Though why on earth you should want to have a Banquet in the morning I cannot understand."

"What I mean is, the Banquet will be at night, but the invitations will have to be written and got off at once, and you've got to write 'em—"

"What!" cried Toad, dismayed. "Me stop indoors and write a lot of rotten letters—Stop a minute, though! Why, of course, dear Badger! What is my pleasure or convenience compared with that of others!"

Toad hurried to the writing-table. A fine idea had occurred to him. He *would* write the invitations; and he would take care to mention the leading part he had taken in the fight, and he would hint at his adven-



tures, and on the fly-leaf he would give a sort of programme of entertainment for the evening—something like this:



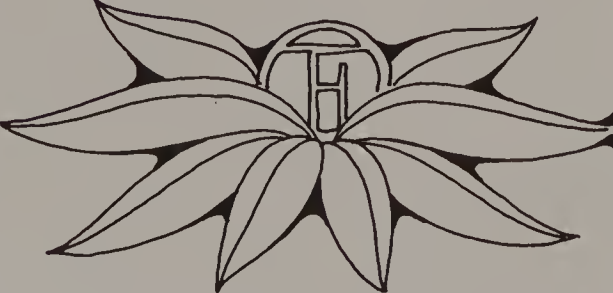

Programme

Speech *by Toad*
(there will be other speeches by Toad
during the evening)

Address *by Toad*
Synopsis ~ Our Prison System ~ The Waterways of
Old England ~ Horse-dealing, and how to deal ~
Properties, its rights and its duties ~ Back to the Land ~
A Typical English Squire.

Song *by Toad*

Other Compositions *by Toad*
will be sung in the course of the evening
by the *Composer*





When the other animals came back to luncheon, the Mole looked doubtfully at Toad, who was looking uppish and inflated. The Rat and the Badger exchanged significant glances, and as soon as the meal was over, Rat and Badger conducted him into the small smoking-room.

"Now, look here, Toad," said the Rat. "It's about this Banquet. We want you to understand clearly, once and for all, that there are going to be no speeches and no songs. We're not arguing with you; we're just telling you."

Toad saw that he was trapped. They understood him, they saw through him, they had got ahead of him. His pleasant dream was shattered. "Mayn't I sing them just one little song?" he pleaded piteously.

"No, not one little song," replied the Rat firmly, though his heart bled as he noticed the trembling lip of the poor disappointed Toad. "It's no good, Toady; you know well that your songs are all conceit and boasting and vanity; and your speeches are all self-praise and—and—well, and gross exaggeration and—and—"

"And gas," put in the Badger, in his common way.

"It's for your own good, Toady. You know you must turn over a new leaf sooner or later, and now seems a splendid time to begin."

Toad remained a long while plunged in thought. At last he raised his head, and the traces of strong emotion were visible on his features. "You are right, I know, and I am wrong. Henceforth I will be a very different Toad. But, O dear, this is a hard world!" And, pressing his handkerchief to his face, he left the room with faltering footsteps.

"Badger," said the Rat, "I feel like a brute; I wonder what *you* feel like?"

"O, I know, I know," said the Badger gloomily. "But the thing had to be done. This good fellow has got to live here, and hold his own, and be respected. Would you have him a common laughing-stock, mocked and jeered at by stoats and weasels?"

At last the hour for the banquet began to draw near, and Toad, who was still sitting in his bedroom, pondered long and deeply. Gradually his countenance cleared, and he began to smile long, slow smiles. Then he took to giggling in a shy, self-conscious manner. At last he got up, locked the door, drew the curtains across the windows, collected all the chairs in the room and arranged them in a semicircle, and took up his position in front of them, swelling visibly. Then he bowed, coughed twice, and, letting himself go, with uplifted voice he sang, to the enraptured audience that his imagination so clearly saw:



The Toad—came—home!

*There was panic in the parlor and howling in the hall,
There was crying in the cow-shed and shrieking in the stall,
When the Toad—came—home!*

When the Toad—came—home!

*There was smashing in of windows and crashing in of door,
There was chivying of weasels that fainted on the floor,
When the Toad—came—home!*

Bang! go the drums!

*The trumpeters are tooting and the soldiers are saluting,
And the cannon they are shooting and the motor-cars are hooting.
As the—Hero—comes!*

Shout—Hooray!

*And let each one of the crowd try and shout it very loud,
In honor of an animal of whom you're justly proud,
For it's Toad's—great—day!*

He sang this very loud, with great unction and expression; and when he had done, he sang it all over again. Then he heaved a deep sigh; a long, long, long sigh. Then he dipped his hair-brush in the water-jug, parted his hair in the middle, and plastered it down very straight and sleek on each side of his face; and, unlocking the door, went quietly down the stairs to greet his guests.





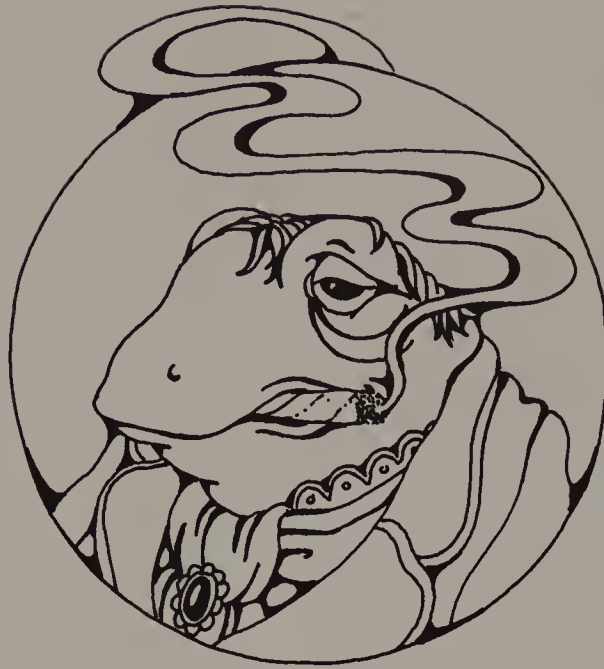
All the animals cheered when he entered, and crowded round to congratulate him and say nice things about his courage, and his cleverness, and his fighting qualities; but Toad only smiled faintly and murmured, "Not at all!" Or, sometimes, for a change, "On the contrary!" "Badger's was the mastermind," Toad said; "the Mole and the Water Rat bore the brunt of the fighting; I merely served in the ranks and did little or nothing." The animals were evidently taken aback by this, and Toad felt that he was an object of absorbing interest to everyone.



The Badger had ordered everything of the best, and the Banquet was a great success. There was much talking and laughter and chaff among the animals, but through it all Toad, who of course was in the chair, looked down his nose and murmured pleasant nothings to the animals on either side of him. At intervals he stole a glance at the Badger and the Rat, and always when he looked they were staring at each other with their mouths open; and this gave him the greatest

satisfaction. There were some knockings on the table and cries of "Toad! Speech! Speech from Toad! Song! Mr. Toad's Song!" But Toad only shook his head gently, raised one paw in mild protest, and, by pressing delicacies on his guests, by topical small-talk, and by earnest inquiries after members of their families not yet old enough to appear at social functions, managed to convey to them that this dinner was being run on strictly conventional lines.





He was indeed an altered Toad!



THE WIND IN THE WILLOWS

Coloring Book

TOAD'S ADVENTURES

by Kenneth Grahame

with pictures by Dominique Michele Strandquest

Color Mr. Toad and his friends and follow their mad adventures in this wonderfully entertaining coloring book. Contained here are the Toad episodes from Kenneth Grahame's classic *Wind in the Willows* along with 50 delightful new illustrations by Dominique Michele Strandquest. Toad, Mole, Water Rat and Badger are incorrigible friends, and they barrel through their adventures—imprisonment in the Tower of London, stolen cars, a Keystone Cops locomotive chase, and more!—in these pictures which are ready for your crayons, paints and felt-tip pens.

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